Energy Collaborative Analysis Initiative
Leadership Committee

Meeting Summary – May 22, 2007

Fourteen people attended the third Energy Collaborative Analysis Initiative (ECAI) Leadership Committee meeting on May 22, 2007, in Washington, D.C.

Darrel Beschen made opening remarks. He outlined some of the primary agenda items for the meeting, including the need for input for the second workshop in June, as well as the ongoing Web forums.

Workshop and Web forum value

The second workshop (June 27-28) will be an extension of the first session, but will also discuss some new topic areas. There are some ideas for the next Web forum topic, but input from the group would be helpful regarding how to make the series as valuable as possible.

Overall, the ECAI organizing group would like input on how to assess the performance of all of the ECAI activities.

Web forums

At the May 1 forum on portfolio analysis, there was representation across national labs because the topic focused on R&D budgets, but we didn't get state representation. How do we get the states involved?

One member asked where he could get follow-up materials from the Web forums. All the presentations are available on the ECAI Web site at http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/collab_analysis/webforum_archive.html.

We could promote the fact that it's a good way to share information without traveling being involved. The last forum, in particular, was a big help in informing portfolio planning.

We need to decide whether the forums are intended for internal and external audience, or whether we should just drive it internally.

We want to have information transmitted from EERE to the labs, but we also need to expand audience. Circulating to a broader audience – state energy offices, general analysts, etc. – would increase awareness of EERE work.

Spread the potential participation – get the word out and make topics "broad" to increase interest – we don't want a "barrier to entry"

However, changing the Web forum to more general topics may make them somewhat less useful to our "committed" audience. It also could lower the bar for participation – there's no investment when the commitment is "from the desk" (Web conference).

Maybe the target audience needs to be defined more - and target audiences could vary with each session.

There was no major consensus, but the Web forum organizers will keep this in mind as they choose future topics.

Possible topics for the futue – benefits estimation metrics (this can complement a session discussion at the second main workshop)

A sample topic: What market, policy, and R&D research performance information translates into action. In short, what analysis causes people to take action.

The house is built on what we think activities might look like and what the future may be, but we need to know what market information and evaluation results could affect market transactions.

What is that information and how does it affect policy. We need to determine what information causes transformation

What causes money to move?
Generic definition of decision maker – what is it that makes these folks act? They need to feel like "I need this information – it will help us develop the policy."

Market adoption and methodologies are key – this topic feeds into the behavorial session for the June workshop.

Some of the topics should try to gain external audiences – focus on issues that have interest but have also been key work of collaborative participants. What are we all working on that could be shared – focus on things we're jointly working on to continue stimulating collaboration. Internal topics could be more like "brainstorming."

Perhaps we need formal criteria for how we select Web topics.

Upcoming June workshop

Really need to have a "success" session upfront – here's what we've done so far with ECAI.

Breakout sessions – are they split up the right way? Is there enough time?

One member commented that the topics are distinct and are attracting different audiences. The first topics are easy enough to decide which you want.

Are these sessions too long? We may need a balance of time. Before allowing people to break into groups, how do we share all of the topics with everyone?

The workshop organizers said that the topics are laid out with different structures for each topic/breakout session – we will keep a very strict clock.

The group reviewed the session breakouts individually:

Breakout Session A - Improve Behavioral Factors in Market/Choice Models and Tools

Bill Valdez commented that there is a lot of work being done in the behavioral area – it needs to be incorporated throughout.

There needs to be an element of something that you learned that you can take away with you and implement. For instance, someone who has done something specifically with research technologies.

We also need to ensure that we're not just highlighting what EERE is doing but look for sharing opportunities.

Perhaps someone can do a live demonstration of a dynamic model and show how behavioral science fits in. They could also look at what elements would be most helpful in shaping technology development. One person noted that the National Science Foundation (NSF) will be funding research in this area.

Speaker for integrated assessment needed – may expand time if don't get speaker. It also appears as thought there's a "workshop within a workshop." With this level of detail, we might not need breakout groups – logistics can handle three larger breakout rooms

Overall structure: Are we getting too specific? Should we have a panel with everyone involved instead? What's the preferred structure?

While you may be somewhat familiar with the topic already in day-to-day work, it would be hard to conduct a breakout session in 35 minutes.

Breakout Session B - Energy Model Data Resources - Technology Characterization and Energy Transmission

Need speaker on energy transmission. Perhaps Walter Short? Someone from Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability? The group is working with the Western

Governors' Association – perhaps there's someone from that representation (Doug Larson??)

Also, there's only 30 minutes for solutions and action items – the challenges and barriers will be identified and then the discussion will examine what we can do to improve energy modeling data. There is value in having more time for smaller breakouts. In the end, you can have "action" planning.

What about another option (you may lose some people) – perhaps combine two of the three sessions? Only two topics on second day – maybe break Energy Model Data Resources into Part A and Part B. Possible speakers: Go to BioWorld? May be harder with broad topics, as opposed to narrow topics. Perhaps geothermal or ocean energy? Hydroelectric topic?

Breakout Session C - Integrated Energy and Environmental Scenarios

Structure starts with presentation, then discussion. Start with high-level topic.

Is there enough time for discussion? The notion of focus is useful – we need to have something specific to take away, instead of just getting agreement on the fact that broad issue is an issue.

May need to reduce speakers in third session. However, this will not be formal presentations – more informal discussions. May be trying to do too much.

Breakout Session D - Improve Economic Impact Evaluation Tools and Methodologies

This is more of a "nuts and bolts" session, getting down to basic questions of the tools, gaps, etc.

Useful to get into the "impact" – also, this area has had a lot of involvement since last workshop so will get update from NYSERDA.

What makes the most sense for the breakout: theory vs. implementation, state vs. regional? Natural break of breakout might be type of project being worked on.

Results we want:

What I learned
What I can do with what I learned
What can I do to participate in the collaborative.

For example, someone else has a tool that I can use to help evaluate an activity. Focus on implementation – how do I use what we've discussed there? Also, focus on type of project and policy possibly in breakout session.

Create focus right away – may need more time for discussion in "what to do with what we learned."

Breakout Session E - Risk and Uncertainty in Energy Modeling

Ideas for introduction speaker? Sam Baldwin could participate as first speaker.

Do we need a list for questions being addressed? We also may want to divide speakers into part presentation, part Q&A (clarifying vs. discussion). Complicated topic – 20 minutes for presentation, 10 minutes for Q&A

Plenary session

Shifted topic slightly – what do you do if you put in all your goals and things "explode"? Tom Key of EPRI is a possible speaker.

Informal panel discussion is good, but we need to take advantage of experience in the audience.

All kinds of examples: If you want to ramp up in fuel cells, what kind of resource problems are there? What does biofuel manufacturing do to your hamburger prices – all sorts of unintended consequences.

Panelists from REMAP could address (Ryan Wiser, Nate Blair, Thomas Jenkin (overview of initiative)

One of the challenges is three presentations. We need to have enough time for people to ask questions in a plenary session. Can we merge 2 and 3? Panel discussion flows into Q&A.

What can we provide to the decision maker? Ways to solve the issue. Is there someone who could provide great challenge?

Overall

How can we get this workshop to get people more "energized"? An intended result is to have analysis that can "increase the knowledge of what all the EA groups have and get them to achieve more together than what we've done separately.

We can assign people to work in specific areas and ask them to identify the one-two problems that we should tackle together – the group will need a quarterly update.

Last year was identifying priorities – this time, ensure that there's more value and "learning" at the actual workshop. The story line is what we did/identified last year – now sharing – improving/collaboration.

In each of these activities, we need to improve representation. How do we take the information that we get on risk, modeling results, etc. and convey it to very busy decision-maker?

Ask the question: How do we get the info out there – who's doing what. What are other people doing to represent complex information visually? Perhaps this should be a portion of each session..